

February 2022

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Important reminders regarding workers' compensation claims:

- An injured employee must notify the supervisor or other person designated by the employer as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after the injury, excluding weekends.
- A USM Workplace Referral Form is required before treatment will be approved at Healthworks. The form can be obtained from University Human Resources. Physical Plant and Residence Life employees, please see the office manager in your department for this form.
- A workers' compensation [First Report of Injury or Illness Form](#) should be filled out within 5 days of the accident and sent to the HR office at Box 5111 or fax to 601-266-4541. This form is located on the HR website.

Please be advised that the preferred facility for initial evaluation and treatment of workers' compensation injuries and illnesses in Hattiesburg is HealthWorks located at 4209 Lincoln Road (Lincoln Family Medical Clinic). For all Gulf Park Operations, employees should be treated through the [Occupational Medical Facilities of Memorial Hospital](#). Only in the event that a work-related accident occurs when the preferred facility is not open or the work-related accident is life threatening should employees be sent to the emergency room. The attending physician should determine the extent of the injury, follow-up treatment necessary, and a return-to-work date.

For additional information about the process for filing a workers' compensation claim, please use this [link](#) to access general information and this [link](#) to view the workers' compensation procedures. This information can be located on the HR website on the [forms tab](#). Any questions should be directed to Christian Cameron, EEO Coordinator, at 6-6618 or [Christian.n.lewis@usm.edu](mailto:Christian.n.lewis@usm.edu).

## CORNERSTONE/JOB DESCRIPTION REMINDER

Prior to submitting a requisition request in Cornerstone, please reach out to your HR Partner to ensure that you have the most recent version of the job description on the correct [template](#) for the position you are preparing to post. Your HR Partner should be consulted when making any changes to the job descriptions to ensure that the correct process has been completed for final review and compensation grading. This process must be completed prior to submitting a requisition request in Cornerstone for new and revised positions. If the information entered does not match our records, your requisition request will be denied. Cornerstone and Job Description Writing Guide trainings are offered monthly and are shared in the newsletter. If you are unable to attend a scheduled training, please reach out to your [HR Partner](#) for assistance.

## EMPLOYEE TERMINATIONS

Reminder that anytime an employee leaves employment with USM as a resignation (includes retirement) or termination, the PAF should have either a resignation letter or termination record attached. The resignation letter is provided by the employee and can be as simple as a declaration of resignation with a date, just something that shows they have made the decision to leave. The “record of termination” template can be found on the HR website, and managers should work with their HR Partner on all terminations and the completion of this form. If you have questions, please reach out to your HR Partner to discuss further.

## W-2 REMINDER

If you consented to receive your W-2 electronically, it is now available through Self Service (otherwise it was mailed to the address we have on file). If you have not signed up to receive your W-2s electronically, take time to do so now using the following link <https://soarhr.usm.edu>, navigate to Self Service>USM HR/Payroll Self Service>W-2/W-2c Consent Link. If you have questions, please refer them to the e-mail to [Payroll@usm.edu](mailto:Payroll@usm.edu).

## UPCOMING HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING

**Job Description Writing Guide**      **Wednesday, February 9 @ 1:30p (1 hour)**

*Audience: Supervisors/Managers*

Summary: Understanding the key elements of an effective job description.

**Progressive Discipline**      **Wednesday, February 23 @ 10:00a (1 hour)**

*Audience: All Employees*

Summary: Understanding USM’s policy for addressing performance and behavior issues through progressive discipline.

Please RSVP to [Karen.figueroa@usm.edu](mailto:Karen.figueroa@usm.edu) to receive the link to the training.

In addition to the above, HR has posted our [full training library](#) on our website with a complete listing of all of our available training that can be requested through your [HR Partner](#) on-demand.

## HR NEEDS CANINE CUDDLES TOO



*Sharessa Parker and Miranda Newman getting their canine cuddles thanks to AOP and Hub City Humane Society!*

## WHAT IS THE EAP AND HOW DO I USE IT?

Join us for a webinar to learn more about the services, confidential nature, and methods available for accessing help from the EAP.

### **Guidance Resources Program Orientation for Employees**

Monday, February 14 at 10:00a (1 hour)

Register [here](#)

The EAP is available to all benefit-eligible employees and members of their household. To register online, go to [GuidanceResources.com](https://www.GuidanceResources.com) or the app [GuidanceNow](#), and use the Organization Web ID COM589. When it asks for your company name, enter UNIVE (a box should pop up with USM for you to select). Remember, membership also comes with telephonic access to talk to a counselor, financial advisor, or legal advisor: 800-272-7255.

Click [here](#) to view a short video about the EAP.

## OVERCOMING ‘CAVE SYNDROME’

The anxiety many of us feel as we break isolation and try to rejoin the world has been given a name: “Cave Syndrome.” While not a medical term, Cave Syndrome is a good description of our fear and unease about leaving our homes as the pandemic, hopefully, winds down.

For many of us, isolation has led to some long-term psychological effects, including stress, anxiety, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Another factor is that, for many, the fear of getting COVID still outweighs the benefits of returning to a more normal life. They feel safe at home and would rather remain isolated than run the risk of getting sick and dying.

If you’re feeling symptoms of Cave Syndrome but want to resume social and work activities, keep the following guidance in mind:

**Take it slow.** Rank activities from easiest to hardest based on your comfort level. For instance, a walk around the neighborhood would be ranked as easy while going to an amusement park would be hard. Start with the easiest activities and work your way up as your comfort increases.

**Ignore peer pressure.** Your limits will be different from the limits of friends and family. Give yourself permission to decline invitations for activities that put you out of your current comfort zone.

**Find alternatives.** Want to eat out again but are afraid of crowded restaurants? Choose a place with outside seating and a time before or after the normal lunch and dinner rush, when crowds are smaller.

**Be informed and objective about risks.** Our risk acceptance has shrunk as our fear has grown. The best way to sort reasonable caution from unreasonable fears is to educate yourself. Use objective resources, such as your physician, instead of opinion-based media to sort fact from fiction.

**Get help.** The past months have been long and difficult. Over that time, we likely have developed some unhealthy coping habits while forgetting our normal, healthy ones. If you’re feeling overwhelmed by fear and anxiety, talk to your doctor or contact your Employee Assistance Program for help.

# HUMAN RESOURCES PARTNERS

By: Krystyna Varnado, Sr AVP for Human Resources

As I reviewed the feedback on the latest surveys for the HR Partners, it occurred to me that the role of the HR Partner may not be fully realized. The HR Partner is a fairly new role at USM- I created the department in June 2017. Since that time, as we've gained experience and resources, the role has continued to evolve. Currently, we have 3 HR Partners- Quentisha Jones (Sr), Sharessa Parker, and Karen Figueroa (Coast)- and they are supported by an HR Generalist- Miranda Newman. Between the 4 of them, they support the entire University with employment, compensation, and employee relations needs. Each partner supports approximately 70-75 leaders. They are amazing.

## This



## Not This



The HR Partners are not customer service agents waiting to answer the phone. They are consultants, change agents, strategists, and thought leaders. At any given time, they are in meetings with leaders discussing issues and strategies, facilitating training sessions, conducting focus groups, speaking to employees about grievances and concerns, or reviewing/creating policies, toolkits, procedures, FAQs, and presentations on behalf of University HR. Because of this, we added the HR Generalist position to focus on Cornerstone and to be more readily accessible in the office for urgent needs.

I created this chart to further explain my expectations of the HR Partners.

| The HR Partner role is to...   | Not...  |
|--|---|
| Provide advice and guidance to leaders on the policies and practices of the university.    | Tell managers what to do or manage for them.  |
| Assist managers with writing job descriptions.   | Writing job descriptions for them.  |
| Be reasonably available and responsive to managers.  | Be on standby waiting for phone calls and emails.   |
| Participate in the development of policies, programs, trainings, and other HR initiatives. | Spending time in activities that takes away from these core responsibilities of the role. |
| Rely on the new HR Generalist to help with Cornerstone job postings.                       | Be the one who primarily posts jobs or provides Cornerstone training.                     |
| Advise and assist managers with investigations.  | Conduct investigations on managers behalf (unless determined appropriate by the Sr AVP).  |
| Help managers get answers to their questions.  | Be able to answer every question they are asked on the spot without referring to others.  |

We ask a lot of the HR Partners and based on your feedback on the surveys they do an outstanding job. Please help me thank them for all they do for the University and please let me know if you have questions or concerns about the services they provide. To learn more and find your HR Partner, please use this [link](#). Thank you!

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

All faculty and staff are now enrolled with a membership to Academic Impressions giving us access to trainings, webcasts, resources, and conference discounts! Free or discounted with your University membership! You will login using your **w#@usm.edu** credentials. Each month we will highlight great learning opportunities for staff and leaders- there are many, many more! Go explore- to access this resource, click [here](#).

### **Comprehensive Student Retention Strategies for Men of Color FREE!**

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE: February 15-16, 2022 |

Join us for this unique and highly practical training designed to help you better understand how your institution fares in terms of the overall experience for men of color and learn pragmatic strategies to improve your retention and student success strategy. You will leave this event with a better understanding of this demographic and a toolkit to increase the retention and graduation rates for your male students of color.

### **Improving Campus Collaboration for Effective Parent and Family Giving FREE!**

LIVE TRAINING: February 23, 2022 | 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

(Recording will be available 10 days after the Live Training)

From the moment a student signs their letter of intent to the day they graduate, parents of undergraduate students typically have a 4-year window to give to your institution. Your development strategy for parent and family giving needs to be strong and should be a collaboration between student affairs, enrollment management and alumni relations. When communication to parents across these divisions is aligned, it can foster an environment of engagement that leads to more giving. Join us online to learn how the parent and family giving model at the University of California San Diego fosters a collaborative environment that leads to effective and impactful parent and family giving.

### **Access a Learning Plan FREE!**

Learning plans on a variety of topics are accessible for a deeper dive into current challenges around workplace culture and communication. Pick your learning plan & download the pdf, complete the training activities & reflect on your learning, and submit your reflection activity to get a certificate of completion. Topics include Building Resilience, Creative Problem Solving in Higher Ed, Developing Better Time Management, Improving your Meetings, Leading More Inclusively, Managing Conflict as a Leader, Managing Difficult Colleagues, and more!

***If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, please contact our main line at 6-4050 or your HR Partner for more information.***

***To the Top- Together***